

# NEWTON YOUTH COMMISSION Meeting

**September 1, 2010 minutes**

**Location: Newton City Hall Cafeteria**

---

Present: Commissioners: Joe De Vito (Chair), Richard Dyer, Advisory Members: Matt Green, Peter Harrington, Stephanie Pelkowsky, Heather Byrns

Staff: Linda Walsh, HHS

Guests: Margaret Hannah (Mspp), Sarah Ecker (Mayors office)

---

The meeting was opened at 7:15 PM and chaired by Joe De Vito.

Introductions were made

**A motion** was made and approved to accept the minutes of April 7, May 5 and June 15.

## Treasurers Report

Linda Walsh passed out copies of the youth commission budget. Peter Harrington noted that the \$2500 budget was a pitiful amount of money. He stated that the Youth Commission budget was \$10,000 when the commission first convened. He said that the commission could use more money to run programs for kids and parents like conferences and workshops that had been done in the past. He said that a survey was done many years ago and should be done again to look at the current needs. The last one was done in the late 1990's. He would like to work with the mayor's office to increase the budget. Sarah said the mayor wants to hear directly from the kids. Stephanie talked about the programs the commission offered years ago bought the 2 high schools together at a time that was really needed.

## Business

Joe said he has met with Mayor Warren. Going forward, the commission will look for ways to get more involvement from the students. He explained the idea of creating an internship program for 8-10 students who would meet weekly with facilitators from the commission who would lead the group to come up with youth issues to address. They could then present their ideas to the commission monthly. He said the mayor wants to hear directly from the youth. Names would be gathered from schools, houses of worship, youth organizations. Anyone could submit a name by a simple application and a small group of youth would be chosen.

Margaret asked what the internship would look like. Joe said it would help students become leaders, organizers and build leadership skills. Peter asked how we would reach out to interested kids because many at this age don't join up for a thing like this. Rick said he wouldn't want it limited to schools. Matt asked what the incentive would be for the kids. Joe said it won't be exclusive. We would reach out to a broad base. Rick said there are a bunch of kids that won't get involved because of the kids that are already involved in this type of venture. Matt mentioned the community service requirement. Sarah said it is not required. Peter said the mayor could set aside 2-3 days a year in his office as an incentive. Joe said there will be a peer to peer connection rather than a parent's choice. Joe said he met this summer with Chris Fortunato at a kids focus group at the Cherry St teen center hosted by Ellen. There were kids that voiced their opinions who wanted to have a say. They are out there. Peter said the Mayor's invitation is important. Kids need to be drawn in by those who they look up to. Joe said the focus group highlighted some areas of what kids want; a place to hang out and transportation. Stephanie said parks used to be more accessible years ago and kids could safely hang out there but not any more. Linda said there are 3 teen centers in Newton currently and there should be a way to working with existing places. Linda said the Mayors internship program seemed to be very successful this past summer drawing kids of all types. Peter said Brigham House

has Middle school kids there. Sarah said she has listened to all the ideas and concerns. She said the Mayor is excited about the internship program and is looking forward to working with us and hearing directly from the kids.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

The next meeting **will be October 6, 2010 at 7:00PM**